

REMARKS

This amendment is in response to the final Office Action dated February 8, 2007. In the amendment, claim 1 has been amended and claims 1-13 are pending in the application.

Reconsideration of the pending claims in light of this amendment and the following remarks is respectfully requested. Although these amendments are presented responsive to this final Office Action, Applicant respectfully requests immediate entry of the amendments in the interest of compact prosecution as they are believed to place the application in condition for allowance.

These amendments add no new matter. The provision of first and second camera support means, as well as a photographing direction in the range of θ_f corresponding to the forward direction and θ_b corresponding rearward direction, with the total range being approximately 180 degrees and the range of θ_f being approximately 60 degrees is shown, for example, in FIG. 3 of the application as filed, and described in paragraph 0023 of the specification.

Claims 1-3, 5-10 and 12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 5,550,754 to McNelley et al. (“McNelley”) in view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,621,462 to Takahashi et al. (“Takahashi”), further in view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,764,291 to Fullam (“Fullam”) and still further in view of JP 08-223492 to Wakabayashi et al. (“Wakabayashi”).

Claim 1 has been amended and now recites: *[a] device for controlling an exposure of an electronic camera, said camera being mounted on an electronic apparatus having a display screen and the camera being capable of setting a photographing direction to at least a forward direction or a rearward direction relative to the front of said display screen, said device comprising:*

exposure detecting means for generating exposure detection information indicative of the average magnitude of said video signals of a photographed image based on video signals generated by the electronic camera;

exposure adjusting means for adjusting the exposure of the electronic camera based on said exposure detection information generated by said exposure detecting means;

first and second camera support means for rotating the electronic camera in a plane perpendicular to and in a plane that vertically extends from the display of the electronic apparatus;

photographing direction detecting means for outputting a corresponding direction detection signal when the photographing direction of the electronic camera is set to the rearward direction,

wherein said exposure detecting means logically divides one photographed image according to first and second patterns, and in the division by said first pattern, divides said photographed image into an upper area and a lower area to generate first exposure detection information relatively strongly reflecting the magnitude of said video signal corresponding to said lower area; and in the division by said second pattern, divides the photographed image into a central area and a peripheral area to generate second exposure detection information relatively strongly reflecting the magnitude of the video signal corresponding to said central area,

wherein said first and second camera support means are respectively located on a first end and a second end of the electronic camera,

wherein said photographing direction detecting means is adjacent to said first camera support means,

said exposure adjusting means adjusts the exposure of the electronic camera on the basis of said first exposure detection information when said photographing direction detecting means outputs said direction detection signal,

wherein said exposure adjusting means adjusts the exposure of the electronic camera on the basis of said second exposure detection information when the photographing direction detecting means does not output a direction detection signal, which occurs when the photographing direction is rotated on said first and second camera support means in a range of θ_f corresponding to said forward direction,

wherein said photographing direction detecting means outputs the direction detection signal only when the photographing direction is rotated on said first and second camera support means in a range of θ_b corresponding to said rearward direction, and

wherein the total range of θ_f and θ_b is approximately 180 degrees, and the range of θ_f is approximately 60 degrees, such that the photographing direction is in the range of θ_b when it is about 60 degrees or more away from the front of said display screen.

These claimed features are neither disclosed nor suggested by the relied upon references, whether taken alone or in combination. Among other things, the references fail to disclose or suggest first and second camera support means respectively located at first and second ends of the camera, and providing a range that extends approximately 180 degrees, from the front of the display screen to the rear of the display screen. These claimed features, including the determination of exposure adjustment based upon whether the camera is determined to be facing the user or away from the user (*i.e.*, from 0 to approximately 60 degrees, the camera is presumed to be facing forward at the user looking at the display screen, beyond 60 degrees the camera is presumed to be rearward at some other object), are not disclosed or suggested by the relied upon references.

Applicant reiterates that the references do not disclose the feature of providing the second exposure detection information when the photographing direction detection means does not output a direction detecting signal. That is, when the camera is in the “forward direction” relative to the front of the display screen, presumably facing the user, the second exposure detection information that provides central weighting features is used. When the photographing direction detection means outputs the direction detecting signal (*i.e.*, when the camera is in the rearward direction), the first exposure detection information is used. None of the references disclose these features.

At best, exposure adjustment in the context of rotating a camera for different orientations (portrait and landscape) is disclosed by Fullam, but this offers no disclosure of doing so in the fashion claimed by Applicant – that is, whether the camera is facing forward or rearward in relation to the display screen. Thus, there is no apparent reason that the artisan would combine the references in the fashion offered by the Examiner.

Claims 2, 3, 5-10 and 12 respectively depend from independent claim 1 and thus incorporate the features recited therein. These claims are thus distinct from the relied upon references for the reasons stated above, as well as for their separately recited, patentably distinct features.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-3, 5-10 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of McNelley, Takahashi, Fullam and Wakabayashi.

Claims 11 and 13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McNelley, Takahashi, Fullam and Wakabayashi, and further in view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,880,783 to Ma (“Ma”), and claim 4 has been rejected under the same statutory section as being unpatentable over McNelley, Takahashi, Fullam and Wakabayashi, and further in view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,677,733 to Yoshimura et al. (“Yoshimura”). These rejections are traversed.

Claims 4, 11 and 13 depend from independent claim 1 and thus incorporate the features described above. Neither Ma nor Yoshimura remedies the deficiencies of the first-four relied upon references; that is, neither reference discloses first and second camera mounting means and corresponding range of approximately 180 degrees wherein the rear-facing range is about 60 degrees or more away from the front of the display screen. Nor do these references disclose determination of exposure setting information according to whether the camera is facing forward or rearward, as previously explained.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 4, 11, and 13 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the noted references.

For the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and allowance of the claims which remain in the application are solicited. If any further issues remain, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned to resolve them.

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Respectfully submitted,

By

Ronald P. Kananen

Registration No.: 24,104

Christopher M. Tobin

Registration No.: 40,290

Attorney for Applicant

RADER, FISHMAN & GRAUER, PLLC

Lion Building

1233 20th Street, N.W., Suite 501

Washington, D.C. 20036

Tel: (202) 955-3750

Fax: (202) 955-3751

Customer No. 23353